

THE DIRECTOR OF  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

National Intelligence Council

18 April 1984

NOTE FOR:

STAT

Center for the Study of  
Intelligence

FROM: Herbert E. Meyer  
Vice Chairman, NIC

Attached memo forwarded as  
requested.

Herbert E. Meyer

NIC# 8640-83  
30 November 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : Herbert E. Meyer  
Vice Chairman, National Intelligence Council

SUBJECT : Why Is the World So Dangerous?

1. The level of global violence has risen as sharply and as suddenly as a child's temperature. In just the last several months we have seen the shoot-down of KAL Flight 007, the assassination of Benigno Aquino, the murderous decapitation of South Korea's leadership in Rangoon, the terrorist bombings of US, French, and Israeli soldiers in Lebanon, the Libyan invasion of Chad, and the anti-Bishop coup in Grenada that ultimately triggered our own successful action on that island. What makes these acts of violence so especially disturbing is their common denominator: each has hurt the citizens, governments, or interests of the Free World.

2. Clearly, the world has become a much more dangerous place. We need to know why. Are these acts of violence somehow linked, or traceable to the same malevolent source? Or should we dismiss the present trend as a series of frightening, tragic, but unconnected events whose one-after-another timing is mere coincidence?

3. I believe the current outbreak of violence is more than coincidence. More precisely, I believe it signals the beginning of a new stage in the global struggle between the Free World and the Soviet Union. My contention rests on a perception that present US policies have fundamentally changed the course of history in a direction favorable to the interests and security of ourselves and our allies. What we are seeing now is a Soviet-led effort to fight back, in the same sense that the Mafia fights back when law enforcement agencies launch an effective crime-busting program. Let me concede right now that I cannot prove this -- if your definition of proof is restricted to intercepts, photographs, and purloined documents. Of course these things matter. They matter hugely. But to truly understand an alien phenomenon like the Soviet Union, one needs to go beyond a listing of facts; one needs also to make a leap of imagination:

4. If four years ago the Soviet leadership had asked my counterpart -- call him Vice Chairman of the Soviet National Intelligence Council -- for his evaluation of the global struggle, I believe my counterpart would have